THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) and (b) In view of accident of 2301 DN Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express on 09.09.2002 near Rafiganj, and on the basis of recommendation of the Commissioner of Railway Safety, on security consideration, a speed restructure of 75 Km.ph. was introduced on certain sections of East Central Railway and Eastern Railway.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Yes, Sir. A close monitoring of the security aspects is being maintained.

Gauge conversion of Lumbding-Silchar section

452. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the gauge conversion of Lumbding-Silchar section of the North-Eastern Railway is pending completion for quite some time;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Ministry of Railways has been pleading for the release of money from the Prime Minister's non-lapsable fund in order to meet the resource constraints to finalize the completion of the project; and

(d) if so, by when Government would release the required fund?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) and (b) The work of gauge conversion of Lumding-Silchar section was taken up in 1996-97. Earthwork and bridge works are in progress. An expenditure of about Rs. 114.6 crore has been incurred on this project upto 31.3.2002. An outlay of Rs. 70 crore has been provided for 2002-2003.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The matter was taken up with Deptt. of Development of North Eastern Region. However, it has not been feasible to allocate funds from Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources due to resource constraints and competing demands from North-Eastern States.